

In the Claims:

Please cancel without prejudice claims 7 - 20

1. (original) A method for producing bent snowmobile studs, the method comprising:
 - providing a stud having a head and substantially straight shank;
 - providing a head engagement member for holding the head relative to the shank;
 - providing a shank engagement member for contacting the shank;
 - engaging the stud head with the head engagement member;
 - engaging the shank with the shank engagement member; and
 - mechanically moving the head engagement member and the shank engagement member with respect to one another such that the shank is bent.
2. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the bent shank defines proximal and distal axes, the proximal and distal axes forming an angle between about 15° and 30°.
3. (original) The method of claim 2 wherein the proximal and distal axes form an angle between about 20° and 25°.
4. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the shank includes threads and wherein the threads remain useful after bending.

5. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein multiple studs are provided and the head engagement member engages multiple heads, the shank engagement member engages multiple shanks and multiple shanks are bent when the head engagement member is moved with respect to the shank engagement member.

6. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the head engagement member is fixed and the shank engagement member is movable with respect to the head engagement member.

Please add claims 21 - 32.

21. (new) The method of claim 1 wherein a bent stud being produced thereby.

22. (new) The method of claim 21 wherein the bent stud is one of multiple bent studs produced by mechanically moving the head engagement member and the shank engagement member with respect to one another at a single time.

23. (new) The method of claim 21 further comprising:
providing an endless track having an interior side and an exterior side and a bore passing therebetween, the bore defining a bore axis substantially perpendicular to the track adjacent the bore, the shank extending through the bore and having a proximal portion defining a proximal axis substantially coincident with the bore axis and a distal portion defining a distal axis forming

an angle greater than about 5° with the proximal axis, the head having a contact surface engaging the interior side of the track; and

attaching a fastener to the distal portion of the shank such that rotation of the shank about the proximal axis is prevented, the fastener contacting the track such that axial movement of the shank with respect to the track is prevented.

24. (new) The method of claim 23 further comprising:

providing the fastener with a leading surface; and

providing a torque-absorbing spacer having top and bottom surfaces and an aperture therebetween receiving the shank, the top and bottom surfaces forming an angle substantially equal to the angle formed by the proximal and distal axes, the torque-absorbing spacer being positioned between the fastener and the track such that the leading surface of the fastener engages the top surface of the torque-absorbing spacer.

25. (new) The method of claim 24 wherein a backer plate having top and bottom faces and a hole therebetween receiving the shank, the backer plate positioned between the spacer and the track such that the top face engages the bottom surface of the torque-absorbing spacer and the bottom face engages the exterior side of the track.

26. (new) The method of claim 23 wherein the shank and fastener include reciprocal threads.

27. (new) The method of claim 23 wherein the fastener is a self-locking nut.

28. (new) A method for producing bent snowmobile studs, the method comprising:

providing a stud having a head and substantially straight shank;

providing a head engagement member for holding the head relative to the shank;

providing a shank engagement member for contacting the shank;

engaging the stud head with the head engagement member; engaging the shank with the shank engagement member; and

mechanically moving the head engagement member and the shank engagement member with respect to one another such that the shank is bent, the shank having proximal and distal axes, the proximal and distal axes forming an angle between about 15° and 30°.

29. (new) The method of claim 28 wherein the proximal and distal axes form an angle between about 20° and 25°.

30. (new) The method of claim 28 wherein the shank includes threads and wherein the threads remain useful after bending.

31. (new) The method of claim 28 wherein multiple studs are provided and the head engagement member engages multiple heads, the shank engagement member engages multiple shanks and multiple shanks are bent when the head engagement member is moved with respect to the shank engagement member.

32. (new) The method of claim 28 wherein the head engagement member is fixed and the shank engagement member is movable with respect to the head engagement member.